Communications Evangelism Team
St. Matthews Evangelical Lutheran Church, Medina, Ohio

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE AND GUIDELINES FOR SOCIAL MEDIA

At St. Matthew Evangelical Lutheran Church, we know that online social platforms, including social networking services (Facebook, Twitter, Snap Chat, Instagram, Youtube), Blogs and message boards, are constantly transforming the way that we interact. We also recognize the importance of the Internet in shaping the public view of our church. Networking opportunities can be used for evangelism and outreach, information for members, and Inspiration.

The Communication Evangelism Team is committed to supporting the congregation's right to interact responsibly and knowledgeably through social media and want our members to share and learn from others in order to build a valuable online community. Transforming into a networked organization involves trust and getting more people involved. This is easier when you have a policy to empower staff and congregation to communicate freely in a responsible way.

Guidelines for Discussing St. Matthew Evangelical Lutheran Church on the Internet

The purpose of these guideline is two-fold: First, to protect St. Matthew's interests, including, but not limited to the privacy of our Staff and members of our congregation. Second, to help make respectful and appropriate decisions about interactions with people on the Internet.

One's personal online activity is his/ her own business. However, any activity that affects St. Matthew's interest are a proper focus for this this Social Media Policy. The Communication Evangelism Team and the Executive Council reserves the right to direct its members to avoid certain subjects and remove inappropriate comments and posts. St. Matthew social media sites are being monitored on a regular basis.

Respect and Privacy Rights When Using a St. Matthew Site

- Staff must understand and agree that he/she represents the congregation's ministry and any postings will be appropriate to the mission; and He/she will keep all confidential and sensitive information private and will not post such information.
- All contributors should always identify themselves, including their name and their role with the congregation.
- Any statements made online should be supported with factual evidence.
- Use common sense.
- Follow the rules of the social media sites you use.
- Speak respectfully about St. Matthew, the Staff and the congregation members.
- Write knowledgeably, accurately and with professionalism.
- Refrain from publishing anything that could reflect negatively on St. Matthew's reputation, or otherwise embarrass the organization. Do not use ethnic slurs, personal insults, obscenity, or engage in any conduct that would not otherwise be acceptable.
- Show respect for topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory.
- Honor the privacy rights of our Staff and members of the congregation.

- Respect the law, including those laws governing defamation, discrimination, harassment and copyright and fair use.

Media

Media inquiries for information *about* St. Matthew, our Staff and our members should be referred to the Communication Evangelism Team or Executive Council. This does not specifically include your opinions (on personal media), writing, and interviews on topics aside from St. Matthew, our Staff and members of our congregation.

Your Legal Liability

- St. Matthew Evangelical Lutheran Church complies with all federal and state laws that apply to our operations and activities.
- Note that the breach of privacy and confidentiality, use of copyrighted materials, unfounded or derogatory statements, or misrepresentation may be considered illegal and is not accepted by St. Matthew.
- Each person at St. Matthew is responsible, and may be legally liable, for the content he or she publishes online.   He/she may be sued for purposely spreading false information.
- If you have any questions, please ask the Executive Council for guidance on compliance with the laws.